



# BEING AN INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH

## Resource Paper #1 | TOWARD A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

The Uniting Church in Australia seeks to be a genuinely intergenerational church in which all ages are welcomed and valued, where every generation is engaged together in active discipleship, growing in and sharing faith in Jesus.

This paper is one of a series that has emerged to assist the church in being and becoming more intentionally intergenerational. It is offered as a resource for all those who share the dream of a more intergenerational church – a church comprised of lifelong followers of Jesus, of all ages, caring, praying, celebrating, learning and serving faith-fully together.

## TOWARD A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

### Why intergenerational?

An intentionally intergenerational environment is more likely to encourage and sustain lifelong discipleship for all ages.

Intergenerational ministry is built upon a solid biblical and theological foundation, takes into account key formational and sociological principles and is supported by developmental, social learning, ecological systems, socio-cultural, situative-sociocultural and gerontological theory.

### What does an intergenerational culture value?

#### Lifelong Discipleship

Bible-based, Spirit-seeking, Jesus-following, Mission-orientated

#### Inclusive Community

Age, Gender, Culture, Ability

#### Genuine Partnership

Intentionality, Accountability, Celebratory, Relational

#### Authentic Relationship

Equity, Mutuality, Reciprocity, Humility

#### Collaborative Leadership

Participatory, Accommodating, Diverse, Reflective

### What do we mean by intergenerational?

Being intergenerational can be thought of as...

- a core value (something fundamental to who we are and who we are aspiring to be)
- an attitude or disposition (the way we approach "other", in this case those who are different to us in age)
- as part of a philosophy of ministry/ethos (the way we do the things we do)

...that encompasses all aspects of our life together.

Being genuinely Intergenerational can be characterised as people from at least two different generations intentionally engaging together in respectful relationships marked by...

- mutuality (all benefit)
- equality (all are valued equally)
- reciprocity (all give and receive)

### What about intergenerational ministry?

#### Intergenerational ministry...

Involves the intentional creating and deepening of relationships across generational boundaries

Occurs when generations are combined together in mutual serving, sharing, learning or celebrating as part of their living out of being the body of Christ

Requires specific intentional action from those in leadership, including modelling and deliberate cultivation of the values, attitudes and behaviours that enhance intergenerational engagement

Seeks the flourishing of communities in which people of all ages share in the journey of life together in intentional holistic relationships that form and sustain lifelong discipleship, embodying the call to live as God's reconciled and reconciling people

